

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 15, 2020

Monika Bickert
Head of Global Policy Management
Facebook

Dear Ms. Bickert,

We are writing to inquire as to what action you are taking to address ongoing paid political disinformation on your platforms. Reports suggest that Facebook is failing to implement its own policies, causing potentially millions of individuals in Arizona to be targeted with misleading political ads on Facebook's platforms ahead of the November election. As Members of Congress we are obligated to protect our democratic process, and with the widespread impact of the Facebook platform we request an immediate response to this inquiry.

As you know, CNN [reported](#) on research by the advocacy group Avaaz which found that collectively hundreds of ads containing or linking to disinformation were being run by the Super PACs America First Action and Stop Republicans. America First Action's 451 ads reached almost 10 million impressions in four swing states with false and misleading information that's been debunked by your own third party fact checkers and reputable newspapers. Stop Republicans' 30 misleading ads ran nationally, earning more than 1.3 million impressions. Despite having the evidence for more than a week, Facebook has reportedly left many of the flagged ads up and even allowed new false ads from the same offending Super PACs.

These ads containing false and misleading content appear to be in violation of Facebook's [promises](#) to "secure the integrity of the US elections..." While Facebook does not fact-check politician's ads, you make [clear](#) that Super PACs are covered by your third-party fact-checking program and must adhere to your prohibition on false and misleading advertising.

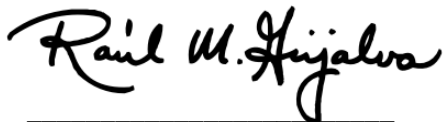
As you know, Congress has an acute interest in the broad impacts of social media platforms and their ability to contain harmful content and protect private information. We therefore urgently request answers to the following questions:

1. Facebook [policy](#) "prohibits ads that include claims debunked by third-party fact checkers." Can you confirm that Facebook has taken down all political ads containing false and misleading information debunked by your fact checking partners? If not, why not?
2. That same [policy](#) notes that "[a]dvertisers that repeatedly post information deemed to be false may have restrictions placed on their ability to advertise on Facebook." Can you confirm that Facebook has restricted all repeat offenders, from placing any more ads until after the results of the election are confirmed? And confirm that you will investigate all advertisers that have run misleading ads? If not, why not?
3. Your fact checking partners create posts on Facebook when they debunk misinformation found on your site, including in paid political ads. Does Facebook plan to distribute corrections from Facebook's fact-checkers to the newsfeed of every user who sees false and misleading political ads? If not, why not?

4. Will Facebook commit to fact checking every political ad before it goes live between now and the time the results of the election are confirmed? If not, how do you intend to protect voters from paid political disinformation?
5. Do Facebook's misinformation detection systems recognize non-English content for factchecking and what is Facebook doing to address the wide propagation of political false and misleading information in the Spanish language?

We must do everything possible to ensure the integrity of the upcoming election and Facebook plays a crucial role in ensuring Americans are not being unduly influenced by deceptive information. We look forward to receiving your response and working with you to address these persisting issues.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress